WPVGA Overview

Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association (WPVGA)

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About WPVGA

- Ranked 3rd in the nation for potato production, and 1st east of the Mississippi, our 110 growers work together to provide the best Wisconsin potatoes and vegetables for consumers.

Mission

- To advance the interests of WPVGA members through education, information, environmentally sound research, promotion, governmental action and involvement.
- Founded in 1948 – Headquarters in Antigo, WI
- Funded by 8-cent/cwt. WPIB assessment (mandatory-approved by industry)
- 110 Grower Members | 189 Associate Division Members
- 162 Auxiliary Members

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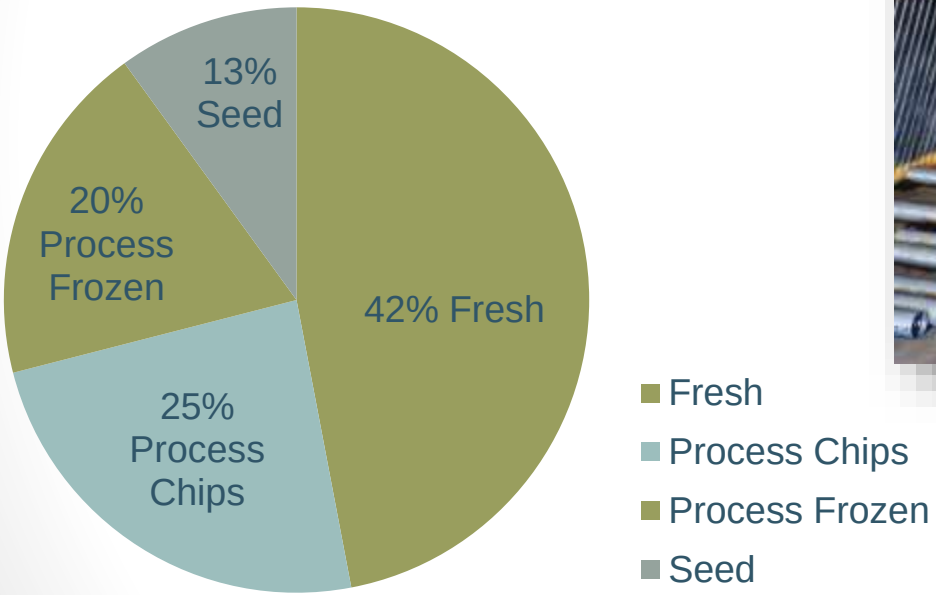
Wisconsin Potato Production

- 57,500 acres of potatoes harvested in 2018 (64,000 planted).
- Average Yield of 400 cwt./acre in 2018 (425 cwt/acre in 2017).
- WI produced 23 million cwt. of potatoes (26.4 million cwt in 2017).
  - $300 million value

Crop Breakdown:



Wisconsin Vegetable Production

Wisconsin ranks in the top five nationally in the production of eight major vegetables:

- 1st in snap beans, beets and cabbage
- 2nd in carrots
- 3rd in potatoes, sweet corn and peas
- 5th in cucumbers for pickles
- Also Top-10 in onions

Top potato-producing counties:

- Portage (8.5 million cwt.)
- Adams (4.8 million cwt.)
- Waushara (4.7 million cwt.)
- Langlade (3.5 million cwt.)
- Juneau (1.1 million cwt.)

WPVGA Priorities

- Research
- Education
- Marketing
- Governmental Affairs

Annual Budget:

- WPIB collects assessments
- WPIB allocates budgets
- WPVGA Funds:
  - Research
  - Education/administration
  - Marketing/promotion
  - Governmental Relations
- Total $2 million-plus trade association

Monthly Trade Publication:
The Badger Common'Tater

Potato seed cutting operation.

Filling the planter with seed potatoes.

Planting potatoes and checking the depth and spacing.

Potato hilling operation.

Irrigation system using drop nozzles to reduce evaporation.

Harvesting potatoes.

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Potatoes can be stored for ten months in Wisconsin.

Potatoes on display at a grocery store.

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Potatoes are still America’s favorite vegetable!

WPVGA Key Initiatives

- **Groundwater Quantity/High Capacity Well Issue**
- Anticipating review and revision of Wisconsin's high capacity well water law, a team of agricultural water users, conservationists and scientists from the UW and the U.S. Geological Survey have joined forces to recommend strategies that protect the state's groundwater.
- Goal is to participate in the legislative process and protect our groundwater resources while at the same time providing an adequate water supply for agricultural producers. Without irrigation by high capacity wells, much of that production would be lost.

WPVGA Water Task Force

WPVGA formed a Water Task Force to find solutions to water issues.

The WPVGA Water Task Force was formed in 2009 to develop and promote responsible water use practices that will protect the groundwater aquifer of the Central Sands and its associated streams, lakes and wetlands in ways that will ensure a sustainable agricultural industry for future generations, foster vibrant rural communities and respect the needs of all its citizens.

Includes expertise from growers, processors, university researchers, representatives of rural communities and others with experience in areas relating to water resources.

WPVGA Water Task Force

- Voluntary conservation practices, groundwater monitoring and applied research are the focal points of the WPVGA Water Task Force.
- The group engages in on-going activities that consolidate and build on the existing knowledge-base related to the hydrogeology of the Central Sands. Among these activities are the following:

Little Plover River Flow Enhancement Project

- WPVGA collaboration with the Village of Plover, the WWA , Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, NRCS, US Fish and Wildlife Service, UWSP and the DNR.

- **GOAL: Revitalize the river by increasing stream flows, improving water quality, and improving aquatic health of the LPR.**

Little Plover River Flow Enhancement Project

Local Actions:

- Purchase and retirement of 60 acres of irrigated farmland in headwaters of LPR; decommission high capacity well; wetland and prairie restoration; forest management.
- Local farmers voluntary soil and water conservation practices.
- Improve fishery, wildlife habitat and quality of life in the LPR watershed.
- $2.6 million investment to date.

Support the Little Plover River Flow Enhancement Project

<u>Funding is Needed.</u> This is an example of a local initiative yielding real results.

The 2017-2019 Biennial Budget Bill provided $100,000 to DNR to provide a grant to the Village of Plover for the purpose of employing an engineering firm to design solutions to increase flow in the Little Plover River.

We ask that the legislature support our efforts and provide a similar $100,000 DNR grant to the Village to *implement* the flow enhancement project and complete the wetland restoration project.

Water Task Force Initiatives

- Working with the Wisconsin Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (WISA), collecting and posting data from over 25 monitoring wells to continuously track fluctuations in groundwater at regular intervals across three areas designated as high risk for surface water impacts (Little Plover River/Plover area, Long Lake/Plainfield area, and Pleasant Lake/Coloma area).
- Groundwater elevations are posted at http://wisa.cals.wisc.edu every three weeks.
- This project has been co-funded by WISA and the WPVGA since 2013.

Water Task Force Initiatives

- Collaboration with the Wisconsin DNR on the data collection and posting from the WISA monitoring wells in the Plainfield and Coloma areas.
- Beginning in early 2018, the WPVGA agreed to allow the DNR to begin collecting and posting the data from these monitoring wells as part of the lakes study component of **2017 Wisconsin Act 10,** related to the potential impacts of groundwater withdrawals in the Central Sands.
- If the department determines that the potential for significant impacts exists, several steps will be taken including a public hearing, economic impact analysis and providing recommendations to the Legislature for special measures to mitigate those impacts on the Long Lake, Plainfield Lake and Pleasant Lake watersheds.

Support DNR Groundwater Study

DNR needs additional funding to complete the *field study* portion of the statutorily required groundwater research at Long Lake, Plainfield Lake and Pleasant Lake watersheds.

Please support the DNR's request to fund the second part of the study that was required as a part of 2017 WI Act 10.

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Water Task Force Initiatives

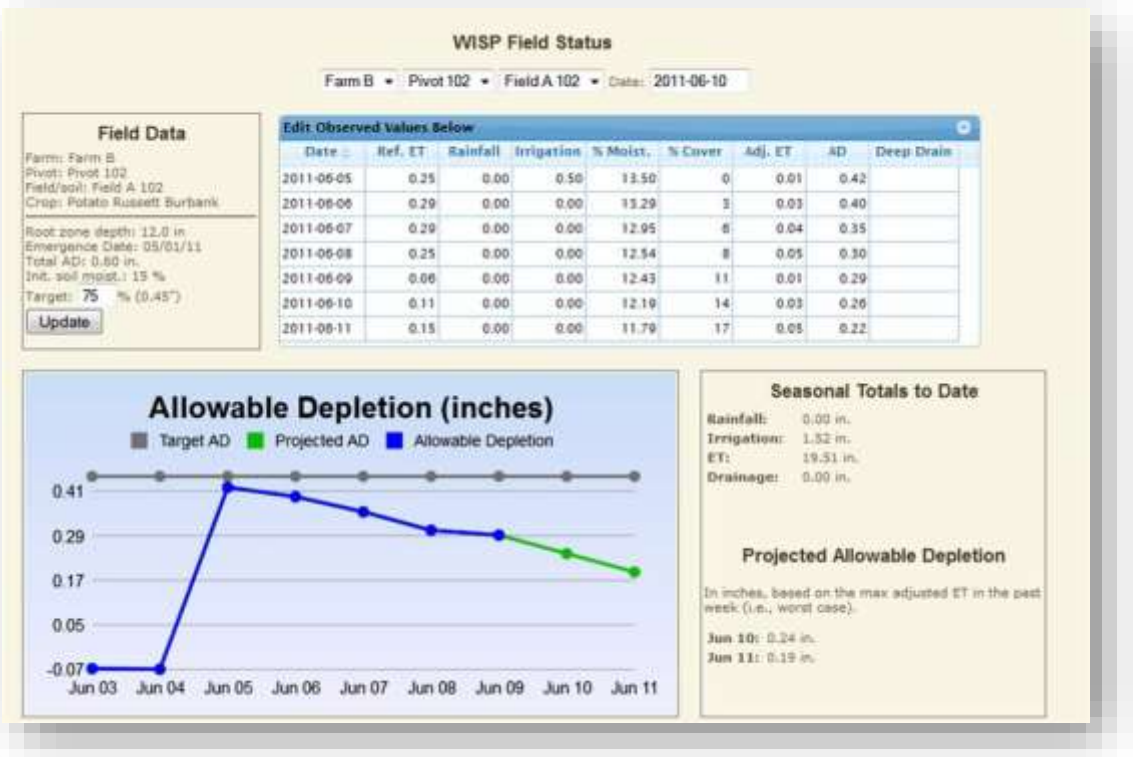
- Collaboration on a three-year research project with the UW Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences Department looking at newer, more accurate and advanced methods of measuring evapotranspiration (ET).
- This project is being led by Dr. Ankur Desai and officially began on July 1, 2018. It involves the purchase of an eddy covariance flux system to measure ET in an irrigated vegetable field as well as using another flux system to measure ET in a nearby forest.
- Research results will be shared with growers to assist them in their irrigation management and scheduling regimes.
- Additional funding from the Wisconsin DNR will be used by the Desai lab to accomplish tasks related to the lakes study component of 2017 Wisconsin Act 10.

Water Task Force Initiatives

- Funding a research project led by Dr. Chris Kucharik, UW Professor of Agronomy and Environmental Studies, looking at nitrate and chloride concentration in irrigation water applied as well as total loads during the growing season in the Central Sands.
- The research results will provide important information for studies investigating nitrogen use efficiency, developing improved nutrient management programs, or those investigating leaching losses to groundwater.

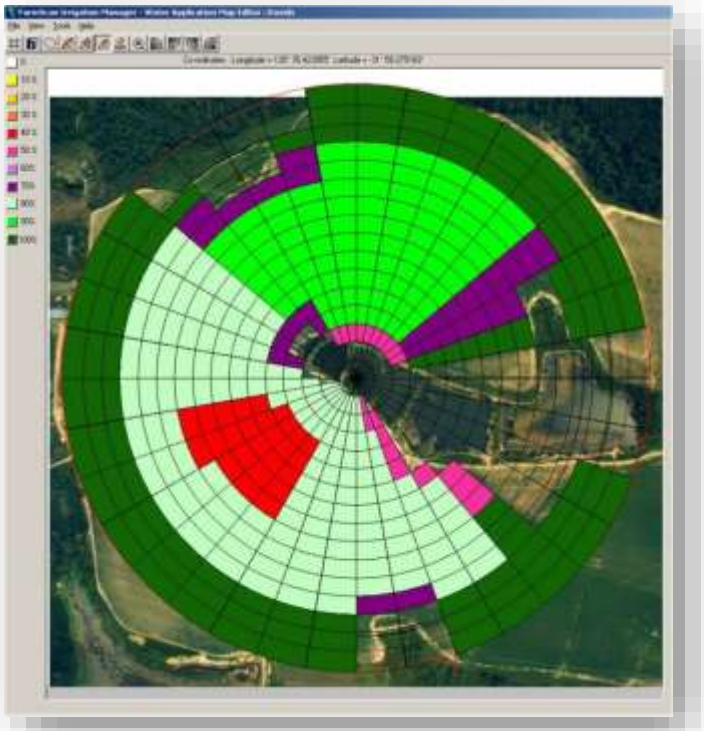
Water Task Force Initiatives

- Funding software maintenance to keep the Wisconsin Irrigation Scheduling Program (WISP) and the Agricultural Weather Data Service operational.
- Work is being conducted at the direction of John Panuska at the UW Biological Systems Engineering Dept.
- The existing WISP software tracks a daily soil water balance to assist growers with irrigation water management.



Water Task Force Initiatives

- Collaboration with and funding of UW scientists in the evaluation of drip irrigation, deferred and deficit irrigation methods to conserve water.
- Deferred and deficit irrigation involve optimization strategies whereby irrigation water is applied during drought-sensitive growth stages of a crop.
- **Research projects like these are needed to identify how to maximize water conservation with minimal impact on potato yield and quality.**



Water Task Force Initiatives

- **WPVGA is collaborating with the University of Wisconsin and the DNR on a new initiative to recognize and reward irrigation expertise.**
- The Wisconsin Water Stewards Program establishes a baseline of water stewardship practices and assists growers in making continuous improvements in the area of water conservation.
- Growers have access to a broad range of expertise to help determine the best way to manage and conserve water resources on their individual farms.

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Support Ag Research Funding

All of these WPVGA Water Task Force projects are working toward sustainable groundwater quantity and quality through evaluating and implementing strategies to increase the efficiency of irrigation while maintaining or improving water quality.

Support funding for applied agricultural research. Our UW-Madison CALS state integrated specialists (CALS faculty with joint appt. UW-Cooperative Extension) do critical work. They are essential to the development of new technologies and practices aimed at improving water quality, pest management and farming across Wisconsin.

Funding for state specialists has been steadily declining. We need more attention to the science of farming. Research has direct effect on the farm economy.

Thank You

- Questions?